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NSC STAFF FOR WATERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/06/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: EGYPT: RULING PARTY TRIES, WITH PARTIAL SUCCESS,
TO PREVENT MEMBERS FROM ATTENDING IRI OFFSHORE TRAINING

REF: CAIRO 2539

Classified by DCM Stuart Jones for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) The Cairo representative of the International Republican Institute (IRI), Keith Kidd, told us on September 2 that senior members of the National Democratic Party were attempting to prevent individual NDP members from taking part in an "offshore" training session organized in Morocco for Egyptians. (Note: Because the GOE continues to refuse to allow IRI to register to operate legally in Egypt, IRI--whose Egyptian operations are funded by USAID--has been running monthly offshore training programs for Egyptian NGO leaders and politicians. End note.)

¶2. (C) According to Kidd, who contacted us via e-mail from Morocco, both Ahmad Ezz (the NDP Secretary for Organization) and Zakariya Azmi (who is both President Mubarak's Chief of Staff and one of three assistant secretaries general of the NDP, along with Gamal Mubarak and Alieddin Hillal) had issued instructions that NDP members should not participate in the IRI training in Morocco, which focused on campaign techniques for candidates for the 2008 local council elections. Azmi reportedly told the NDP members that "IRI is operating against the State of Egypt."

¶3. (C) Kidd also reported that he was subjected to a lengthy but polite passport inspection as he departed Cairo International Airport. When he arrived in Rabat, via a short Paris transit, it appeared that his luggage had been tampered with (a TSA lock on the bag had been broken and the contents obviously searched, but nothing was missing).

¶4. (C) Kidd told us on September 6 that six of the 14 invited NDP members did participate in the Rabat training. He also said that several of the NDPers who had backed out at the last minute had subsequently called to express their apologies and ask if they could participate in future IRI training sessions.

¶5. (C) Comment: The unwelcome decision by the NDP to turn up the heat on IRI is somewhat offset by the fact that a number of NDPers apparently felt that the benefits of IRI training outweighed any potential punishment for violating party discipline.

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